



An Act to Promote Innovation, Safe Workplaces and Health in Connecticut S.B. 1022, H.B. 5702

The goals:

Protect Our Health

Over 180 illnesses and disabilities are now linked to toxic chemicals. Scientific evidence increasingly indicates that toxic chemicals in everyday life contribute to the growing epidemic of chronic diseases and disorders, including: asthma, birth defects, cancer, developmental disabilities, diabetes, endometriosis, Parkinson's disease and infertility.

Many hazardous chemicals can be replaced with safer alternatives. Safer substances, safer chemicals, safer manufacturing processes, and more efficient operations can all reduce hazardous substances in consumer products, at workplaces and businesses, in homes, on land, and in air, water and food. The bill establishes a flexible, supportive program to promote the use of safer alternatives wherever feasible. By helping Connecticut manufacturers make the transition to safer substances and processes, we can reduce illnesses and health care costs, reduce developmental disabilities in children and special education costs, reduce pollution, and improve worker, community and environmental health.

Develop a Healthy Economy

Modernizing Connecticut businesses to use safer alternatives will not only help prevent widespread suffering, it will reduce the economic costs of preventable illness and toxic pollution. Use of hazardous substances and polluting technologies creates hazardous waste disposal costs for businesses and government, increases health care and special education costs, and increases business liability and risk while reducing worker productivity.

Innovative industries and safer chemicals ("green chemistry") can create the safer products and sustainable jobs that are increasingly demanded in today's economy. The European Union and other countries have already adopted more health protective requirements for products. In 2007 the E.U. will begin implementing new regulations on chemical substances used in manufacturing, with the goal of reducing over 30,000 toxic substances and phasing out 1,500 of the most toxic substances. Connecticut companies wishing to sell products in Europe will need to eliminate their use of the high-hazard toxins. This "safer alternatives" approach will assist Connecticut businesses in competing in a changing global marketplace, where toxic chemicals are a liability. Even China now refuses to import a range of U.S. products deemed too toxic.

Enhance Security & Public Safety

Reducing toxic chemicals will decrease the risks of accidents, terrorism or other emergency situations that could seriously damage the public health and safety. Recent fires and spills have raised public concern.

What this bill does:

Requires Reporting of Toxic Substances

Companies using and/or producing large quantities of hazardous substances (i.e., those that must report to the national Toxic Release Inventory) will be required to report their use of highly hazardous toxins, as determined by the U.S. EPA, to the CT Department of Environmental Protection on an annual basis.

Creates an Innovation Institute

Reducing the use of hazardous substances and dangerous operations protects worker and community health and saves businesses money. This bill would create an Innovation Institute affiliated with the University of Connecticut Health Center.

The Innovation Institute will help Connecticut industries evaluate hazards in production and materials, and shift to safer alternatives. Starting with the 1,500 toxins identified for phase-out in the European Union, and then proceeding to the 30,000 substances the E.U. plans to phase out in the coming years, the institute will assist Connecticut businesses in assessing safer alternatives to toxic chemicals and transitioning to safer workplaces. Specifically, the institute will:

- Gather data, conduct research, and promote alternatives to health-damaging substances and work environments in Connecticut industries and communities
- Provide resources, tools, training and support to make Connecticut a safer place to live and work
- Promote economic competitiveness through improved efficiency, compliancy stability and reduced risk

Creates a Flexible Program to Help Companies Transition to Safer Alternatives

The Institute, in collaboration with a growing network of similar institutes in forward-thinking states across the U.S., will analyze each general type of use of the toxic chemical, (i.e. a type of product or industrial use) and whether feasible, safer alternatives exist.

Coalition Members include: ConnectiCOSH, CT Citizen Action Group, CONNPIRG, CT Coalition for Environmental Justice, CT Public Health Association, CT Nurses Association, Clean Water Action, Ecological Health Organization, The Watershed Partnership, Toxic Actions Center, Ct Association of Directors of Health, ConnFESS and growing.

Connecticut can be a leader in technological innovation, globally competitive businesses, and the protection of workers, communities and consumers.

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